

**LGMA  
Summary  
Local Authority  
Performance  
Indicators 2018**



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# 1

## Introduction

**1.1.** This commentary prepared by the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) provides the context to the 2018 performance indicators for the local government sector in Ireland. The indicators are collected and analysed by the LGMA on behalf of the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) as part of the Commission's role in monitoring the performance of local authorities. This report presents the performance of local authorities in 2018 using 37 indicators identified by NOAC. The performance indicators are categorised by local government functions; housing, roads, water, waste/environment, planning, fire services, library/recreation, youth/community, corporate, finance and economic development. While the indicators address the core functions of local authorities, it is acknowledged by NOAC that they do not reflect the extensive range of services delivered by city and county councils throughout the State.

**1.2.** This section presents a summary of the key results, the methodology used to gather the indicators, and provides an overview of the financial and economic context in which local authorities operated in 2018. The remainder of the report provides a commentary on the indicators for a range of functions, including housing, roads, water, waste/environmental management, planning, fire services, library/recreation, youth/community, corporate, finance and economic development.

### Summary of results – At a glance

- 1.3.** The highlights of the **2018** performance indicators are:
- ▶ By December 2018 local authorities owned **134,880 social housing units**.
  - ▶ Local authorities added **3,965 units** to the social housing stock in 2018, an increase of 57% from 2017.
  - ▶ The average time to **re-let** a social house reduced from 29.0 weeks in 2017 to **27.7 weeks** in 2018. The average cost of re-letting a housing unit increased from €16,407 in 2017 to **€18,590** in 2018.
  - ▶ The number of tenancies in the private rented sector decreased by 1.5% between 2017 and 2018 to **322,230** units.
  - ▶ Local authorities manage and maintain **95,762 km** of regional and local roads.
  - ▶ **75% of motor tax** transactions were conducted **online**, an increase from 72% in 2017.
  - ▶ **79,095 pollution complaints** were made to local authorities in 2018, an increase of 19% from 2017.
  - ▶ **65,379 samples of private water schemes** were taken in 2018, an increase of 13% from 2017.
  - ▶ There was a **14%** increase in **new builds** notified to local authorities in 2018, increasing to 19,808 in 2018 from 17,321 in 2017.

- ▶ **17.1 million visits** to libraries in 2018 where **14 million items** were borrowed.
- ▶ **28,308 people working in local government**, down from 32,044 in 2009.
- ▶ There were over **77.2 million** visits to local authority **websites**. The number following local authorities via **social media** increased by **40%** to **2.4 million** in 2018.
- ▶ The **Local Enterprise Offices** assisted in the **creation** of **3,656** whole time equivalent **jobs**. In addition, local authorities play a key role in job creation and economic development, such as planning, infrastructure, tourism and enterprise space.

## Methodology

**1.4.** To ensure that the performance indicators are valid and reliable, a thorough approach is taken to collating and analysing the data:

- ▶ 37 performance indicators are consistently measured across each local authority;
- ▶ A Head of Implementation has been designated in each local authority to co-ordinate data collection across multiple local authority departments;
- ▶ The data was input to a bespoke software system, 'LG Returns', which enables an appropriate audit process to be undertaken on all data;
- ▶ The data was input by local authority staff between February and April 2018;
- ▶ Once input, the data was validated and audited from May to September 2019 by NOAC;
- ▶ The LGMA collates further datasets from external sources including the Central Statistics Office (CSO), the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG), the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (DTTAS),

the Road Management Office (RMO), the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB), the National Waste Collection Permit Office (NWCPO), Enterprise Ireland (EI), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); Tobin Consulting and An Taisce;

- ▶ Following validation of the data, the LGMA prepared this commentary on the data; and
- ▶ NOAC audits the results and uses the data to analyse the performance of local authorities.

## Comparing Local Authority Performance

**1.5.** Each local authority is different. While local authorities provide a similar range of services, they must take account of national policies, local needs and the democratic priorities of a particular area. In addition, the diversity between local authorities impacts on performance measurement. Specifically, geographic spread, population density, resources and socio-economic profiles are among a range of factors that affect the demand for different services locally. Thus, rather than make comparisons between local authorities, it is more appropriate to measure performance of individual local authorities addressing local priorities over time.

## Reporting Figures

**1.6.** Where possible national average figures are used to illustrate the performance of the local government sector in aggregate. Where this is not the case, or where use of a national average is not available due to data limitations, median values are used. Median is considered a more accurate reflection than the mean figure because divergent figures across local authorities can disproportionately bias the mean, making it unrepresentative. In instances where the median is used, the report clearly highlights this.

## Context

**1.7.** The paragraphs that follow provide the economic and financial context in which local authorities operated in 2018.

## The Irish Economy

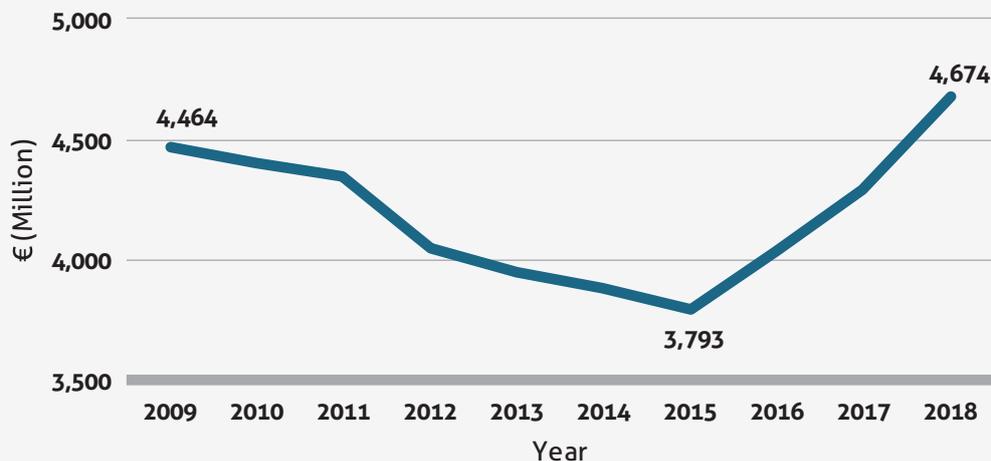
**1.8.** The Irish economy experienced significant growth in 2018, with GDP increasing by 8.2% and GNP increasing by 6.5% in 2018 relative to 2017 (Central Statistics Office, 2019b). By December 2018, the seasonally adjusted monthly unemployment rate fell to 5.3%, down from 6.2% in December 2017 (Central Statistics Office, 2019a).

## Local Government Resources

**1.9.** As illustrated in Figure 1.1 below, local government revenue budgets reduced from €4.46 billion in 2009 to a low of €3.79 billion in 2015. However, since 2015, the local government sector's income has increased, with an aggregate local government revenue budget in 2018 of €4.67 billion (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, 2018).

**1.10.** Staffing levels in local government were significantly reduced from 32,044 in 2009 to 26,858 in 2016, a reduction of 16.2% over this period. By the end of 2018, the total number of whole-time equivalent staff increased to 28,308, representing a 5.4% increase in staffing levels since 2016.

**Figure 1.1:** Local Government Revenue Budgets 2009 - 2018



**Source:** Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, 2018

## Local Government Reform

**1.11.** Since the publication of the **Report of the Local Government Efficiency Review Group** in 2010 (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2010) and **Putting People First: Action Programme for Effective Local Government** in 2012 (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2012), the local government sector has implemented significant reforms. These are underpinned by the Local Government Reform Act, 2014. In particular, town councils were abolished and municipal districts were established, reforming the democratic structures and governance of city and county councils.

Local authorities play an expanded role in community and economic development, with the establishment of the Local Community and Development Committees and the adoption of the Local Economic and Community Plans. These plans set out an integrated approach to social, cultural and economic development of local areas. Local Enterprise Offices were set up to support entrepreneurship in each local authority area. In parallel, water services have been transferred to Irish Water under a Service Level Agreement with each local authority.

**1.12.** In addition to the changes in the democratic and functional structures, the local government sector implemented a series of efficiency reforms. Shared services were established to deliver back office services such as payroll and procurement and a range of other functions such as environmental services, road management and building control.

**1.13.** The **Programme for a Partnership Government** commits to continued reform of local government and the sector continues to meaningfully participate on the national public services reform agenda that is led by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (Government of Ireland, 2016a).

# 2

## Housing

**2.1.** The local government sector, working with the DHPLG, is committed to the delivery of the **Rebuilding Ireland Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness**, which was published by the Government in July 2016 (Government of Ireland, 2016b). The Action Plan commits to delivering 25,000 new homes annually and a total of 50,000 social housing units by 2021. This represents an investment of €6 billion in housing by the Government over the period 2016 to 2021. In 2018, delivery under the **Rebuilding Ireland Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness** programme provided 6,861 new homes nationally through new builds and acquisitions (Rebuilding Ireland, 2019).

The housing performance indicators below measure housing stock, housing maintenance and management, private rented inspections and homelessness. In addition to these important services, housing services of local authorities provide disability grants, are responsible for estate management, administer the tenant purchase scheme, housing loans and rents and provide traveller accommodation.

By the 31st December 2018 the local government sector owned 134,880 social housing units, an increase in their overall stock by 3,266 units or 2.5% compared to the 1st January 2018.

**2.2.** The number of dwellings added by local authorities increased from 2,532 in 2017 to 3,965 in 2018, an increase of 56.6%.

### Housing Management

**2.3.** In 2018, the percentage of vacant dwellings within the social housing stock was 2.8%. This includes all units awaiting re-tenanting, illegally occupied units or those awaiting necessary repair work. This represents a slight increase compared with a vacancy level of 2.7% in 2017.

**2.4.** The average time from vacation of a dwelling to commencement of a new tenancy reduced from 29.0 weeks<sup>1</sup> in 2017 to 27.7 weeks in 2018. The average re-letting cost of a unit increased by 13.3% from €16,407<sup>2</sup> in 2017 to €18,590 in 2018. The average cost of housing maintenance decreased from €1,189<sup>3</sup> in 2017 to €1,147 per unit in 2018, a reduction of 3.5% from 2017.

1 The methodology used to calculate this figure was revised in 2018. Figure reported in 2017 was 28.9 weeks. The figure has subsequently been recalculated and restated for 2017 according to the revised methodology to enable a direct comparison across years to be made.

2 The methodology used to calculate this figure was revised in 2018. Figure reported in 2017 was €17,107. The figure has subsequently been recalculated and restated for 2017 according to the revised methodology to enable a direct comparison across years to be made.

3 The methodology used to calculate this figure was revised in 2018. Figure reported in 2017 was €1,312. The figure has subsequently been recalculated and restated for 2017 according to the revised methodology to enable a direct comparison across years to be made.

## Homelessness

- 2.5.** The performance indicators use data as at 31st December 2018 when there was a total of 6,083 adults homeless and in emergency accommodation, of which 61.6% were in emergency accommodation for 6 months continuously.

## Private Rented Sector

- 2.6.** Between 2017 and 2018 the total number of registered tenancies decreased from 327,187 to 322,230, a decrease of 1.5%. A total of 23,824 units were inspected by local authorities in 2018, an increase from 16,230 in 2017. Of those units inspected in 2018, 83% were found to be non-compliant with current standards regulations.

# 3

## Roads

**3.1.** Local government is responsible for a total of **95,762 km** of regional, local primary, local secondary and local tertiary roads in Ireland. With the exception of a number of urban local authorities, road maintenance is primarily funded through grants from the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (DTTAS). The performance indicators present information on the road surface ratings, and the road maintenance programme. Local government plays a key role in relation to roads and transportation, including public lighting, traffic management, pedestrian pathways, parking management, road safety, safety in severe weather conditions such as flooding and cold weather, and traffic management for festivals and events.

### Pavement Surface Condition Index

**3.2.** The Pavement Surface Condition Index (PSCI) is a standardised means to assess and rate the surface conditions of roads. The data on road surfaces is derived from a central system called MapRoad. In 2018<sup>4</sup>, there were:

- ▶ A total of **13,163 km** of regional roads, of which 100% were PSCI rated in the 24-month period to 31/12/2018.

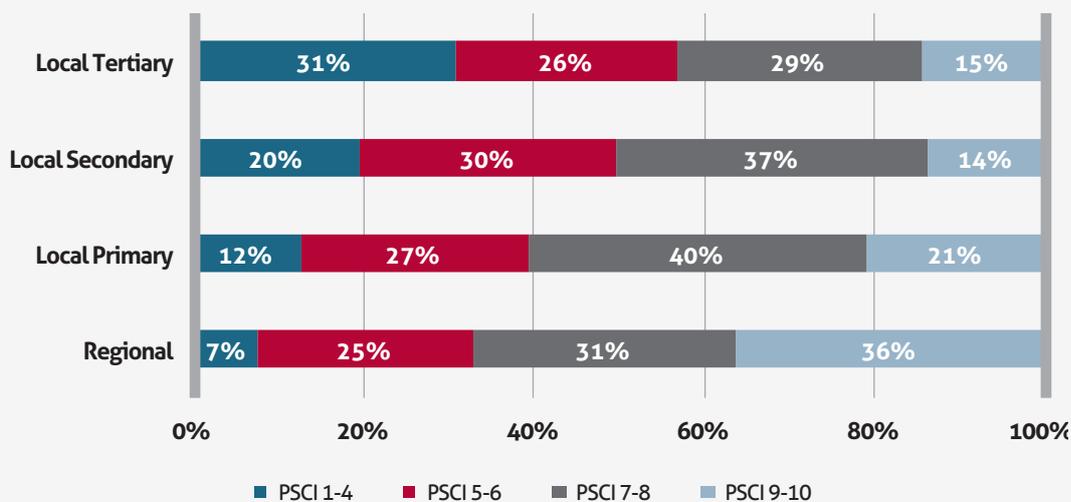
- ▶ A total of **23,865 km** of local primary roads, of which 85% were PSCI rated in the 24-month period to 31/12/2018.
- ▶ A total of **33,661 km** of local secondary roads, of which 77% were PSCI rated in the 24-month period to 31/12/2018.
- ▶ A total of **25,073 km** of local tertiary roads, of which 78% were PSCI rated in the 60-month period to 31/12/2018.

**3.3.** For the purpose of the performance indicators, the roads that have a PSCI rating are categorised as follows:

- ▶ **Category 1-4:** Structural Distress
- ▶ **Category 5-6:** Surface Defect; Localised Distress
- ▶ **Category 7-8:** Surface Defect
- ▶ **Category 9-10:** No/Minor Defects

<sup>4</sup> The period over which PSCI ratings are measured was changed in 2017. Results prior to this are therefore not directly comparable with 2018. Refer to Section 2 (Roads R1 to R3) of the NOAC commentary for more information.

**Figure 3.1: Pavement Surface Condition by Road Type**



**3.4.** The PSCI Rating for Regional Roads, Local Primary Roads, Local Secondary Roads and Local Tertiary Roads are presented in Figure 3.1.

▶ €162.5 million in strengthening 2,216 km of local roads and €37.1 million to reseal 1,966 km of local roads.

### Road Grants Works

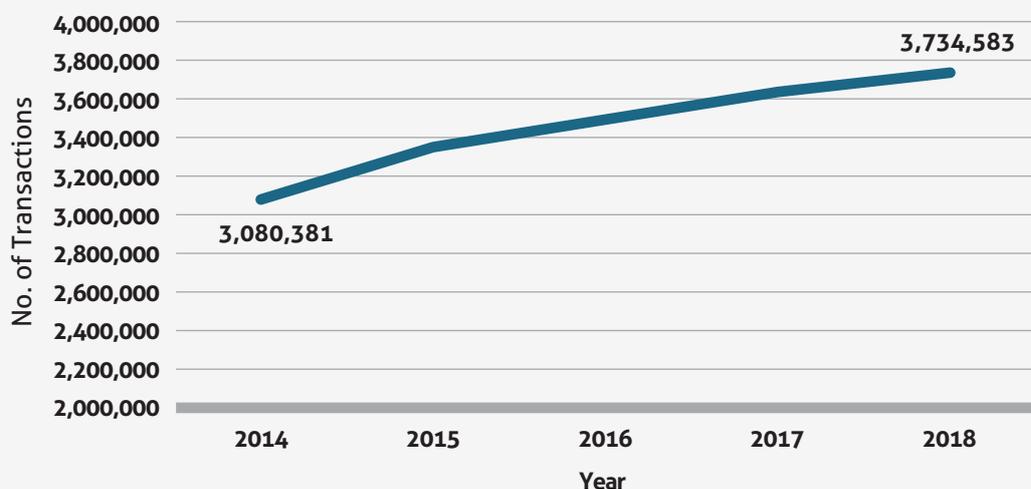
**3.5.** In 2018, the DTTAS and the local authorities invested:

- ▶ €70.1 million to strengthen 416 km of regional roads and €12.9 million to reseal 398 km of regional roads; and

### Motor Tax Online

**3.6.** In 2018, 3,734,583 motor tax transactions were conducted online (Figure 3.2). This represents 75% of all motor tax transactions. In 5 years, between 2014 and 2018, the number of motor tax transactions online increased by 21.2%.

**Figure 3.2: Motor Tax Transactions Online 2014 - 2018**



# 4

## Water and Environment

### Water Services

**4.1.** Water services are the responsibility of Irish Water having been transferred from local authorities under a Service Level Agreement with each local authority through the Water Services (No.2) Bill 2013. Local authorities are however responsible for complying with statutory requirements with respect to drinking water in private schemes. In 2018, a total of 65,379 samples were taken at private water schemes, an increase of 12.5% over the number of samples taken in 2017. In 2018, 97.1% of samples were compliant with statutory requirements.

### Environment

**4.2.** Local authorities carry out a broad range of environmental services including street, park and beach cleaning, litter services, veterinary services, cleaning graffiti, road cleaning, management of recycling centres and civic amenity sites, and management of landfill sites. Local authorities play a regulatory role in relation to waste collection. Three Waste Enforcement Regional Lead Authorities (WERLAs) for the Southern, Eastern and Midlands, and Connacht/Ulster Regions were established at the end of 2015. The objective of the WERLAs is to support improved performance and greater consistency in waste enforcement.

The total number of households situated in an area covered by a 3-bin service increased by 11.4% from 669,323 in 2017 to 745,381 in 2018. This represents 43.9% of all households nationally, an increase from 39.4% in 2017.

### Pollution and Litter

**4.3.** In 2018, a total of 79,095 pollution complaints<sup>5</sup> were made to local authorities, an increase of 19% above the number of complaints made in 2017.

**4.4.** Local authorities, in partnership with voluntary groups such as Tidy Towns and Chambers of Commerce, are working to reduce the level of litter in their areas. In 2018, 82% of areas surveyed were unpolluted/litter-free/slightly polluted, an improvement from 80% in 2017 as illustrated in Figure 4.1. The level of moderately/significantly/grossly polluted areas has reduced from 17.5% to 16% in the same period <sup>6</sup>.

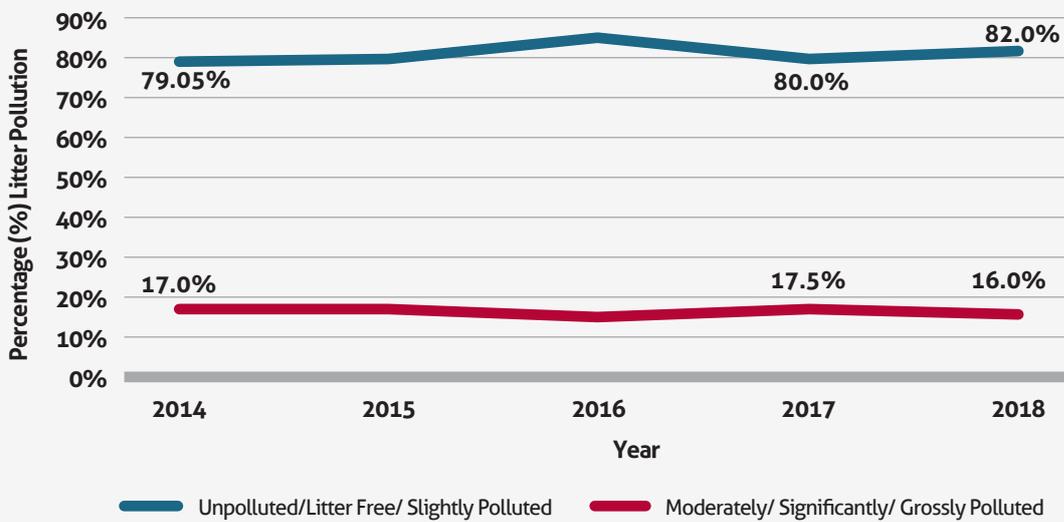
<sup>5</sup> This includes litter, air, noise, water or waste pollution.

<sup>6</sup> This data is based on areas surveyed and to that extent median values are used.

## Green Flag Status

**4.5.** Green-Schools is an internationally recognised programme designed to encourage and acknowledge whole school action across seven key environmental themes. The programme offers a structured way for schools to promote environmental sustainability in their day-to-day operations. Nationally, the programme is managed by An Taisce, with local authorities a key partner in this process. Specifically, local authorities provide environmental education and support to schools which are working towards one of seven Green Flags, each linked to a specific environmental theme. At the end of 2018, 2,037 schools held a Green Flag, representing 51.4% of all schools nationally.

**Figure 4.1:** Trends in Levels of Litter Pollution 2014 - 2018



# 5

## Planning

- 5.1.** Local authorities are responsible for forward planning, in addition to providing regulatory, development management and enforcement functions for their areas.

### New Buildings Inspected

- 5.2.** In 2018, local authorities were notified of a total of 19,808 new buildings, an increase of 14.4% over 2017 figures. Of these, local authorities inspected 4,649 in 2018, representing an annual increase of 4.9% of new buildings inspections carried out by local authorities.

### Appeals to An Bord Pleanála

- 5.3.** A total of 1,813 planning decisions made by local authorities were appealed to An Bord Pleanála in 2018. Of these, 76.9% of decisions made by local authorities were confirmed by An Bord Pleanála. This compares with 79.5% for the same figure in 2017.

### Cost per capita of Planning Services

- 5.4.** The cost of planning services includes forward planning, development management and enforcement. In 2018, the cost per capita of planning services across the sector was €29.24. This represents an increase from €28.31 in 2017.

# 6

## Fire Services

**6.1.** In addition to fire emergency services, local authorities conduct inspections on buildings for fire safety and provide a range of fire prevention services. The performance indicators focus on mobilisation of fire emergency services. For the purpose of the performance indicators there is a distinction made between mobilisation and attendance to both fire and non-fire scenes.

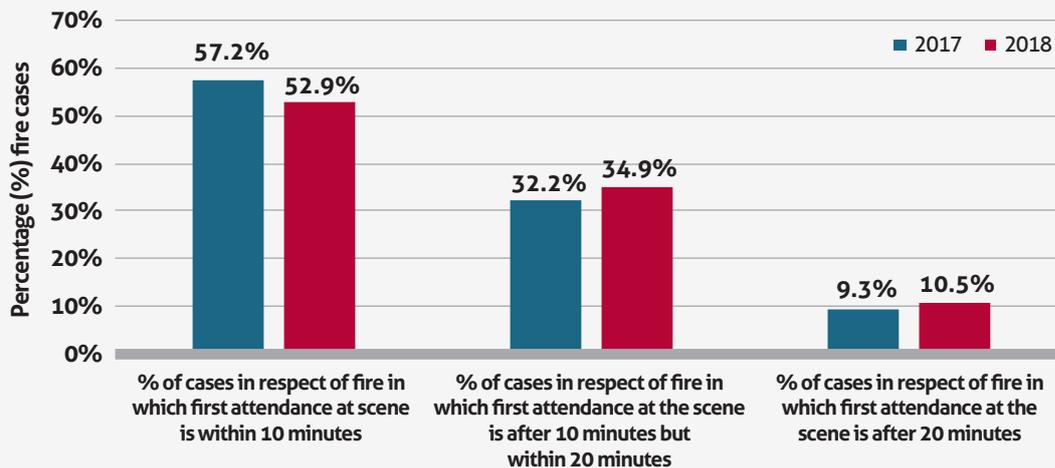
1 minute 25 seconds, while the median time in part-time fire stations was 5 minutes 34 seconds. This compared with 1 minute 27 seconds and 5 minutes 29 seconds respectively in 2017.

**6.3.** Figure 6.1 below compares the times of first attendance at a fire scene in 2017 and 2018. This highlights relatively consistent attendance times between 2017 and 2018. In 2018, 52.9% of fire scenes were attended within 10 minutes while 34.9% were attended within 10-20 minutes. This compares with 57.2%<sup>7</sup> and 32.2%<sup>8</sup> respectively in 2017.

### Fire Scenes

**6.2.** In the case of fire, in 2018 the median number of minutes taken to mobilise the fire brigade in full-time stations was

**Figure 6.1: National Average Response Times to Attend Fire Scenes**



<sup>7</sup> The reporting of this figure was revised in 2018. The median value of local authorities was reported in 2017. This was changed to the reporting of the national average figure in 2018. The median % of cases in respect of fire incidents in which first attendance at the scene was within 10 minutes in 2017 was 40.5%. The 2017 figure has subsequently been recalculated and restated according to the revised reporting method to enable a direct comparison across years to be made.

<sup>8</sup> The reporting of this figure was revised in 2018. The median value of local authorities was reported in 2017. This was changed to the reporting of the national average figure in 2018. The median % of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance at the scene was between 10-20 minutes in 2017 was 44.7%. The 2017 figure has subsequently been recalculated and restated according to the revised reporting method to enable a direct comparison across years to be made.

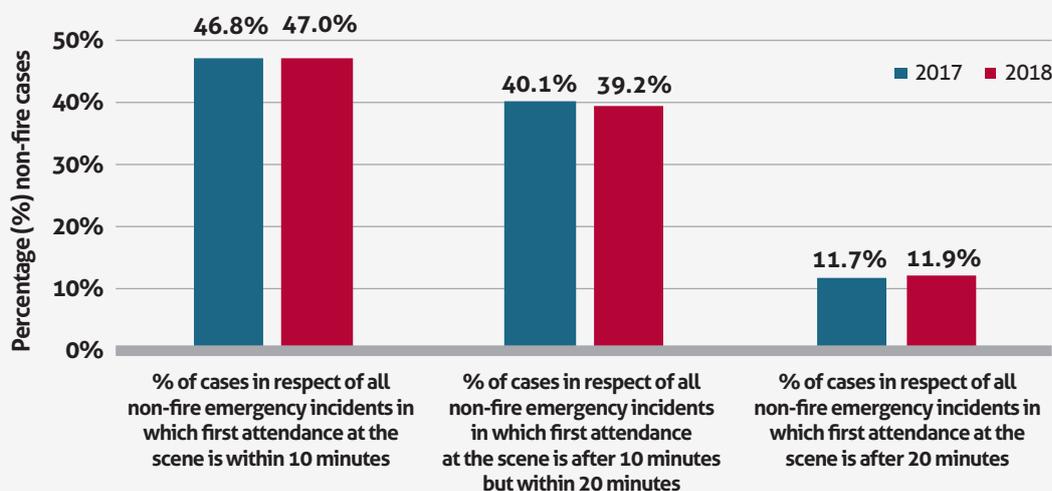
## Non-Fire Scenes

- 6.4. In 2018, it took a median of 1 minute 27 seconds to mobilise from full-time fire stations and 5 minutes 40 seconds to mobilise from part-time fire stations for all non-fire emergency incidents. This compares with response times of 1 minute 35 seconds and 5 minutes 32 seconds respectively in 2017.
- 6.5. Attendance to non-fire scenes is presented in Figure 6.2 below, showing that in 2018 47% of non-fire scenes were attended within 10 minutes and a further 39.2% were attended within 10-20 minutes. This compares with 46.8%<sup>9</sup> and 40.1%<sup>10</sup> respectively in 2017.

## Cost Per Capita of Fire Services

- 6.6. The per capita cost of fire services across the local government sector in 2018 was €61.63<sup>11</sup>. The cost of operating fire services is influenced by whether the fire service operates a full-time or part-time fire brigade. Cork City is the only fire authority operating a full-time brigade with no retained fire-fighters. Other large local authorities employ a combination of both full-time and part-time fire fighters. For instance, Dublin City employs both full-time and part-time fire fighters and operates the service for the Dublin local authorities; Dublin City, Fingal, South Dublin and Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown. Galway County Council operates a shared service for Galway City and County Councils. The majority of local authorities however continue to provide fire services on a part-time basis.

**Figure 6.2: National Average Response Times to Attend Non-Fire Scenes**



9 The reporting of this figure was revised in 2018. The median value of local authorities was reported in 2017. This was changed to the reporting of the national average figure in 2018. The median % of cases in respect of non-fire incidents in which first attendance at the scene was within 10 minutes in 2017 was 33.6%. The 2017 figure has subsequently been recalculated and restated according to the revised reporting method to enable a direct comparison across years to be made.

10 The reporting of this figure was revised in 2018. The median value of local authorities was reported in 2017. This was changed to the reporting of the national average figure in 2018. The median % of cases in respect of non-fire incidents in which first attendance at the scene was between 10-20 minutes in 2017 was 52.1%. The 2017 figure has subsequently been recalculated and restated according to the revised reporting method to enable a direct comparison across years to be made.

11 Figure excludes population receiving its first response from the Northern Ireland Fire Service from the cost calculation.

# 7

## Library Services, Youth and Community

### Library Services

- 7.1.** In 2018, there were a total of 17,067,255 visits to libraries run by local authorities, an increase of 0.8% over 2017. A total of 13,999,466 items<sup>12</sup> were borrowed, an increase of 0.6% since 2017. In addition to borrowing, people visit libraries to find information, get help from a librarian, participate in events and courses, access PCs and Wi-Fi, and for study and community space.
- 7.2.** The cost per capita of operating the library service in 2018 was €33.98. In 2017, this was €30.99<sup>13</sup>.

### Public Participation Networks

- 7.3.** Public Participation Networks enable the public to take an active and formal role in the policy making activities of local authorities that will affect their own communities. In 2018, a total of 15,043 community organisations were included in the County Registers nationally, an increase of 1,714 since 2017. Of these, 17.9% opted to be part of the Social Inclusion College of their respective Public Participation Network. Community organisations may opt to participate in one of the two other Colleges of the PPN; the Community and Voluntary College, or the Environmental College.

### Youth

- 7.4.** Comhairle na nÓg are local councils for young people to provide them with an opportunity to be involved in the development of local policies. In 2018, 67.4% of second level schools participated in the Youth Councils/ Comhairle na nÓg, a decrease from 69% in 2017.

<sup>12</sup> Library borrowings include books, DVDs, audio, eBooks, e-magazines, e-audio and ProQuest etc.

<sup>13</sup> A figure of €31.00 was reported in 2017 in error.

# 8

## Corporate

### Staffing

**8.1.** The number of whole-time equivalent staff working in local authorities fell from 32,044 to 28,308 during the ten-year period 2009-2018, a reduction of 11.7% in staffing levels over this period as shown in Figure 8.1.

### Working Days Lost to Sickness

**8.2.** The percentage of paid working days lost to medically certified leave remained static between 2017 and 2018 at 3.78%, whilst the percentage of paid working days lost to self-certified leave reduced to 0.35% in 2018 from 0.38% in 2017.

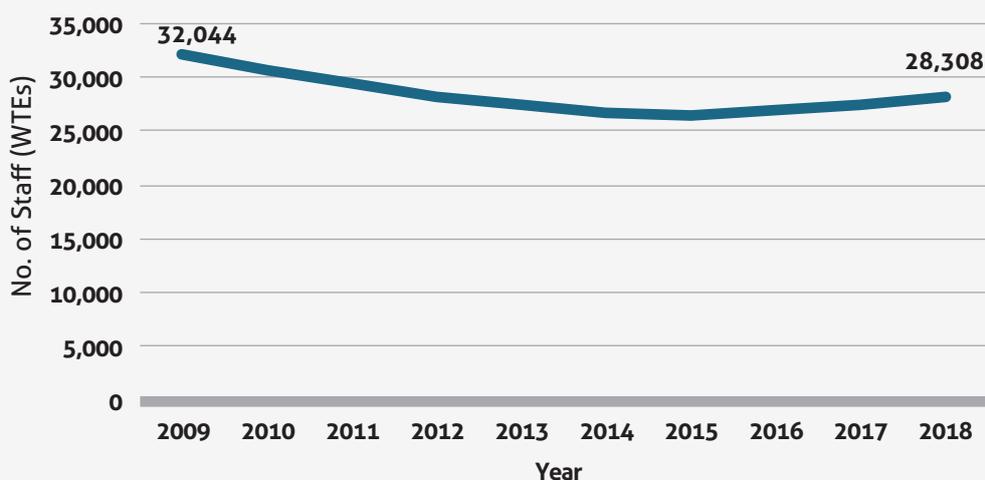
### Use of Websites and Social Media

**8.3.** Local authorities are increasingly providing key services online. In 2018, there were a total of 77,213,343 page views of local authority websites, an increase of 10.8% from 2017 figures. In the same period there was an increase of 39.6% in followers of social media pages of local authorities from 1,703,665 to 2,378,851.

### Cost per capita of ICT

**8.4.** In 2018, the cost per capita of ICT provision per whole time equivalent across the local government sector was €2,894.57<sup>14</sup>. This compares with €2,807.96 in 2017.

**Figure 8.1:** Staffing in Local Authorities 2009 - 2018



14 The methodology used to calculate this figure was revised in 2018. In addition, the figure reported in 2017 was the mean cost for all local authorities rather than the national average. In 2017, the mean cost of ICT per whole time equivalent reported was €3,048.41. In 2018, the national average figure is used for calculation purposes. The 2017 figure has subsequently been recalculated and restated according to the revised methodologies to enable a direct comparison across years to be made.

# 9

## Finance

- 9.1.** As outlined in Section One, local authorities operated in a particularly challenging financial environment between 2008 and 2015, with a very modest recovery in local government income in recent years. As a result, by 2012 most councils were operating at a revenue deficit. By 2018, 13 local authorities were operating at a deficit.
- 9.2.** The total revenue expenditure by local authorities in 2018 was €4.66bn. The average revenue expenditure per capita by local authorities was €978.91.

### Commercial Rates

- 9.3.** The local government sector implemented a comprehensive debt management programme in recent years that involved improved processes, alignment in reporting with methods used by other public sector bodies and a focused debt management training programme. Furthermore, rates collection targets were set for each local authority. In 2018, the collection of Commercial Rates improved in 27 local authorities, remained static in 1 local authority and declined in 3 local authorities. The median level of commercial rates collection increased from 82.5%<sup>15</sup> in 2017 to 86.0% in 2018.

### Rents and Annuities

- 9.4.** The median collection rate for Rents and Annuities remained static between 2017 and 2018 at 89%. Collection rates improved in 17 local authorities, remained static in 8 local authorities and declined in 6 local authorities.

### Housing Loans

- 9.5.** In 2018, the collection of Housing Loans improved in the case of 24 local authorities, remained static in 2 local authorities and declined in 5 local authorities. The median collection rates for housing loans increased from 74% in 2017 to 75% in 2018.

<sup>15</sup> A median figure of 83.0% was reported in 2017 in error.

# 10

## Economic Development

Local authorities play a significant role in relation to economic development. In addition to adopting and coordinating the implementation of the Local Economic and Community Plans (LECPs) and the Regional Action Plans for Jobs, the sector provides planning and development services, physical infrastructure, and supports social enterprises.

The Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) are central to local economic development. This support structure contributes to the creation and sustainability of jobs in local communities, strengthening new and existing business development nationwide. In 2018, the LEOs assisted businesses to create an additional 3,656 whole time equivalent jobs<sup>16</sup>, an increase of 404.5 over 2017.

LEOs also offer financial assistance, training and advice to help businesses trade online through a Trading Online Voucher scheme. The number of Trading Online Vouchers approved by LEOs in 2018 was 1,107, while 521 were drawn down during the year. The total number of participants that received mentoring in 2018 was 9,625.

In addition to the data captured by the Performance Indicators, the value in the LEO structure also lies in supports such as core business training, networking events, advice and referral for start-ups, micro enterprises and small businesses locally.

Local authorities also deliver a range of festivals, events and place branding, bringing tourism into cities and towns throughout Ireland. 28 local authorities have a designated Tourism Strategy to assist with tourism development. Tourism Officers, which assist in tourism promotion, also exist in 28 local authorities.

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<sup>16</sup> Where part-time jobs were created they were counted as 0.5 of a whole time equivalent. This represents a net increase in jobs created by LEO clients, and takes into account job losses.

# 11

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